



Numerous docks line the shores of Coffenbury lake, perfect places to enjoy the view.



The Wreck of the Peter Iredale is a popular tourist destination throughout the year.



The 2 mile trail around Coffenbury Lake provides an accessible, easy hike.



Photos by Malia Riggs

Autumn sun shines through the trees at Coffenbury Lake.

## Free entry at Fort Stevens PLAY IN THE PARKS

BY MALIA RIGGS

With a full belly of turkey and the football game wrapped up, it may seem that all anyone can think about is what mega-deals they plan to snatch up tomorrow.

But for those who want to hang onto the holiday spirit, spend more quality time with family or just avoid the commercial crowds, our state parks have a Thanksgiving treat.

What the world has come to know as Black Friday has been relabeled “Green Friday” for numerous park and recreation departments across the country, and in both Oregon and Washington, the day-use fees for state parks will be waived this Friday.

### Explore Fort Stevens

Fort Stevens, the northernmost park in Oregon, offers a plethora of hikes, picnic areas and historic sights for the

whole family to check out.

The two mile loop around Coffenbury Lake, the Wreck of the Peter Iredale or Battery Russel, all short drives from each other, are perfect for a quick escape from the capitalistic madness.

### Check out Coffenbury

The loop around Coffenbury Lake is quick, easy and beautiful. Some hefty sneakers or hiking boots are suggested due to roots and mud on the trail hidden under fallen autumn leaves. But don't let roots and mud stop the fun – any Oregonian knows a little dirt never stopped anyone!

The hike is peaceful, though anything but silent. Ducks bark across the water, elk graze on the foliage and mud squishes under sneakers as hikers pass by on the narrow but accessible trail.

### Go play

With winter around the corner and fog

teasing coastal towns with misty mornings and dewy afternoons, it's hard to get the motivation to go outside, let alone go on a hike.

But with Green Friday's waived fees, fantastic hikes and beachy views are hard to ignore. Bundle up, enjoy the last colors of fall and take advantage of the park's gifts.

The lake and the shipwreck are both perfect places to enjoy a thermos of homemade hot cocoa. Both locations have either picnic benches or smooth driftwood to take a seat on and enjoy the views instead of the crowded lines of Black Friday shoppers in nearby department stores.

And remember, what makes Thanksgiving special is the company. Regardless if the day includes muddy hiking, beach adventuring or just warm coffee and a cruise through the park, what matters most are the smiles shared and the memories made.

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